

Buttercups
and
Clover



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Arthur Ward



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Buttercups and Clover

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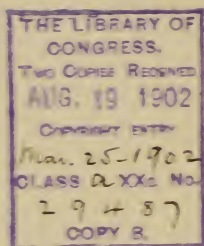
Other Verses

BY
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Denver, Colorado
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PREFATORY NOTE.

In this book are included some selections that have never appeared in print before, and others that have been published in magazines and papers in different parts of the country.

I take pleasure in acknowledging special obligations to the publishers of the *Youth's Companion*, for the use of "Buttercups and Clover," and to the *Outlook* for the privilege of printing "Spring's Prophet."

My thanks are also due to Rev. John Watson, D.D. (Ian Maclaren), for his kind permission to use "A Wayside Greeting."

There are here presented several poems of the Spanish War, two referring to the return of the Colorado First from the Philippines.

The story in the poem of "The First Prisoner" is founded on an incident occurring in the early part of the War of the Revolution.

Holiday poems and poems of the seasons find their place in other parts of the book.

A. W. B.

I give you welcome, comrades all,
Who in our circle find a place,
And as the loitering moments fall,
Take council, face to face.
And if some answering chord I find,
That trembles in a kindly heart,
'Tis not in vain my words are lined,
I've played my little part.

BUTTERCUPS AND CLOVER.

Down on the desk she laid her head,
The starting tears concealing,
Down in her heart, the ache was there,
The dreary, homesick feeling.

The little mistress, all alone,
Felt friendless and forsaken,
The daily drudgery of life,
Had all her courage taken.

"Nobody cares," she whispered low,
She certainly *was* crying;
She listened to the plaintive breeze
That through the pines came sighing.

She heard a noise, and some one now
Was through the entry walking;
And then was standing by her chair,
Just at her elbow, talking.

"Please, teacher," said a childish voice,—
What *was* it Jack was saying?
"You looked as though your mother would
Not let you go out playing;

"I thought that you was feeling bad,
And that you'd like some candy.
But when I hunted in my bank
There wa'n't a penny handy:

"And so I went and brought you these,
Just buttercups and clover!"
Her tears were falling on the flowers,
But soon the shower was over.

He pointed to the buttercups,—
“You see, I play they’re money!”
Then showed her, in the clover-blooms,
How she might find the honey.

“Dear little Jack!”—some one *did* care!
She kissed him three times over;
The whole room seemed to be in bloom
With buttercups and clover.

SPRING'S PROPHET.

When day is new, and seas of gold
Break over barren fields of brown
And naked trees, by Winter's frown
Made bare, and flood o'er lingering banks of cold
White snow,—faintly my waking ear
Catches a rushing thrill
Of sweetness, in a tumbling trill
Of joy-notes clear.
A troubadour in speckled gray
Heralds the buds and blooms of May,
And, as he tunes his quivering lay,
Says stream and lake at last shall yield;
That Jack Frost's white and sparkling shield
No more shall turn the shafts of sunlight rays;

That little pieces of the sky
Shall fall in violets by and by,
Noiseless as snow in winter days ;
Then other birds shall sing,
While summer clouds float low,
Whose glad tears, falling soft, shall bring
Out stars of gold, that show
In grassy skies of green,
Where dandelion-blooms are seen ;
Gently the sun shall lift the sleeping flowers ;
Up from their drowsy beds,
Fresh with the kiss of dews and showers,
In mantling blush they'll raise their heads.
And so, from out his throbbing throat,
My prophet pours his simple tale
Of sparrow-lore, in fluttering note,
In glen and field, o'er hill and dale.

GLEANINGS AFIELD.

Day's first dew is on the meadow ;
Heaven's dew on daisies white ;
Where the sunrise glints in crystals,
Rainbow jewels gleam with light.

Grass-blades hide 'neath cobweb-laces
Shimmering with frosted mist ;
Rosy red in mantling blushes,
Bright Aurora keeps her tryst.

Full, from soft and sleepy chirping,
Trilling clear on skyward note,
Matin hymns of bright-robed songsters
High through leafy arches float.

Where the running blackberry tangles
Round the borders of the field,
In the stone-wall's cooling shadow,
Brooding low, Bob White's concealed.

"More-more-wet!" he plaintive whistles;
Anxious mowers scan the skies;
Pausing as their scythes they're whetting,
Each his cautious forecast tries.

All along the sloping hillside
There's a golden carpet thrown,
Where, in summer's haze, abundant
Harvest gathered home has grown.

Sweeter far than fields of roses
Or the blooming orange spray,
Blows the breath across the valley,
Of the scattered new-mown hay.

Oh, to fall into its billows,
There to bathe in fragrance deep!
Loud the locust's mazy whirring!
Soft the mower's swishing sweep!

Fair in rustic framing woven,
Love-lit skies are bending low;
Ruth is gleaning for her Boaz
As in Judah long ago.

Crickets chirp in evening glooming,
Drowsily my senses roam,
By the brook the fire-fly's flashing
And the cows are coming home.

Oh, the home-lands, golden glowing!
Loving hands in beck'ning call!
When shall I on thy dear valleys
See the summer sunshine fall?

LOVE'S ECHO.

Faint through the birches floating,
Back from the pastures wide,
Sweet and low in its noting,
Clear by the river-side ;

Listen ! lightly 'tis fluting,
"Away—far away—away !"
Mystic and light the luting,
Tender the melting lay ;

"I'm so far—so far—from you !
I swing on the willow tree !
I'm feathered, I'm folded, in blue !
I'm waiting, my mate, for thee !"

Now it is skyward lifting ;
Lesser and lighter grows,
Into the breezes drifting,
Over the ling'ring snows ;

"I'm back from a sunny clime!
Far away—far—from you!
I'm dreaming of blossom-time!"
Murmurs my bird in blue.

Oh, where flits the bird and his mate?
And where sighs the breath of Spring?
The breezes over the blossoms wait,
And the bluebird is on the wing.



SONG-TIME.

There's a message from the South-lands,
Softly singing in the breeze,
"Lift your eyes, for vernal glories
Fall on barren fields and trees!"

Buff-winged butterflies are floating,
Lightsome fairies in the air,
Fast the pulse of life is quick'ning;
Breathing, budding, everywhere.

Stars of hazel-flowers are lifting;
Yellow cowslips scatter gold;
Busy workers gather pollen;
Sunshine searches corners cold.

Near the sparkling waters' edges,
Reverend blackbirds gravely walk,
Chattering through the bending sedges,
Striving all at once to talk.

In the greening woodland opens,
Crops for boyish hands to reap,
Partridge bush and red'ning fox-plums,
Soon through drying leaves will peep.

All the orchestra of Nature,
In a mingling choral strain,
Gladly strikes the hallelujah,
"Bloom has come to Earth again!"

A BREATH OF MAY.

The clouds have flung their crystal showers ;
The brooks are gladly singing ;
And, far and wide, the nodding flowers
To life are freshly springing.

And odors new of growing green,
The zephyrs pure are filling ;
The bees are working for their queen,
There's early morning trilling.

'Tis five, and time is striking May ;
The year's bouquet is making,
The lambs are on the hills at play,
The peeping world is waking.

The bluebird pipes his tender note,
And full in fervor thrilling,
The sparrow in his speckled coat
His warbling joy is spilling.

Afield the children all will go,
They all will go a-Maying,
Where lately o'er the driven snow
They gaily rode a-sleighing.

Oh, songs of pines and willow trees!
Oh, happy woodland voices!
There's blending music in the breeze,
And earth and air rejoices.

ON WINTER PLAINS.

Inland away from sea and tide,
The distant mountains far in sight,
With driven snow the plains are spread,
The summer flocks have taken flight.

But still some feathered winter guests
Are feeding on the drying seeds,
In fluffy coats content they chat
And flutter through the leafless weeds.

But I am lost ! away from men,
The rolling prairie stretches drear.
My little roof seems less than home,
At night I watch the heavens for cheer.

I dream that rounded windows small,
In millions break the walls I see,
And fancy all those twinkling fires
Are signal beacons set for me.

Lone from the world that thinks and lives,
A mite upon the whitened field,
I turn the leaves of Nature's book.
And read her secret lore revealed.

AWAKENING.

The Arctic curtain from the North,
That falls when autumn dies,
On spring's new scenes, in living greens,
Slowly begins to rise.

Soft from the South, a balmy breeze
From orange groves shall blow,
Starting the buds on leafless trees,
And melting winter's snow.

The king of birds, in twittering words,
Has issued his commands;
Quick to obey, the fluttering flocks
Wheel out for Northern lands.

For volunteers, the queen of flowers
Has called to meet spring's chill;
In sturdy grace, with golden face,
Blooms forth the daffodil.

Good-by—we linger on the words—
To skates, to sleds, to hoods!
Welcome to summer's vanguard train,
Sprites of the fields and woods!

A SUMMER LOVE.

“I love you!” I know it, pansy ;
My trysting is glad with you ;
Your face has the peace of Heaven,
And your eyes are always true ;

I’m sure your feathery wrinkles
Are not from fretting or care,
They are just the lines of cheer, dear,
That your heart has written there.

Did you make love to the rainbow ?
Or the rainbow bend to you ?
The richness of your purple and gold,
Did you catch from its sunbeam’s hue ?

You say there's always a promise,
Where there is a rainbow bright?
Trust whispers, wherever it arches,
That there, it is ever light.

Your touch is as soft as velvet,
Like the coat of the bumble-bee;
Sweet, from your place, in modest grace,
My pansy, look up to me.

You're a bit vain in the morning,
Sparkling in diamonds of dew;
But the leal light of your face, dear,
Makes everything seem more true.

UNDER THE APPLE TREES.

Oh, why of Cathay am I dreaming,
 In drowsy contented delight,
 As soft breezes rustle the tree-tops,
 Dressed in their bridals of white?

I'm drifting through sweet-scented billows,
 And slowly Time loses its hours;
 While the pink-tinted shells of blossom,
 Flutter in floral showers.

Like the flushing cheek of a lassie,
 As the marriage bells blithely chime,
 Is the tinge of the blushing petals,
 In apple-blossom time.

All up in the air there's a humming
Of an old labor-song sublime,
For the nuptials of Summer coming,
In apple-blossom time.



ON SHORE.

Shoreward we trim our snowy sails
Where sand-hills in the gloaming
Lift their round heads above the beach
And crested rollers foaming.

The plover calls from off the marsh;
The lighthouse gleams a greeting;
We dip to white-winged travelers
Out to the windward beating.

From the far west, the flooding rays
Of golden glory streaming,
Show a bright way across the spray,
In burnished splendor beaming.

The surf moans low upon the bar ;
The fisher-boy is calling ;
The water splashes at the bow,
Where deep our anchor's falling.

The rowlocks answer to the dip
Of oars that slow are sweeping ;
The boat tips light upon the strand
Where fast the tide is creeping.

Before the doorway of our tent,
A welcome beacon keeping,
Lit from the old wreck stranded high,
Our ruddy camp-fire's leaping.

We hear the roar along the shore
Of splashing surges meeting,
Soothing to dreams of slumb'rous streams
Through gravelly shoals retreating.

Faint and more faint the billowy beat
Of ebb and flow is stealing;
The misty scenes of Elf-land grow,
Our lightest sense ensealing.

Till, lost to thought of life and love,
We wait the breath of morning,
When crimson, dripping from the sea,
Reddens the Sun to dawning.

TROUTING.

Thou gently sweet disciple of a master wise and
good,

Whose rules for joys serene long on the calendar
have stood,

Quaint Izaak Walton's mystic craft I much com-
mend to thee,

When leaving men and busy mart the days go
tranquilly.

For patient purpose gives reward to him who
wields the rod,

Not o'er the back of errant youth who willful
ways have trod,

But over finny favorites who silent glide away—

Butting their heads against the streams where
shattered sunbeams play.

We all admit 'twas pretty fun that Simple Simon
had,

On the day he went a-fishing when he was but a
lad.

'Tis fine to feel the bite of shark, if 'tish't in your
flesh,

To angle on the salty brine or in clear waters
fresh.

I love to pull a pickerel, a salmon or a cod,
To float a seine, to throw a line or silent hold a
rod;

But angles right or angles left do not at all com-
pare

With angling for the canny trout with sportsman's
cunning care.

If your weather eye's not open, to start you will
not dare;

For it must not be too stormy and it should not
be too fair.

And, as you fish, the breezes ought to meet you
in the face;

Turning your footsteps down the stream, your way
do not retrace;

While across the whirling eddies you lightly make
your cast,

Just keep your shadow on the shore or to your
boat held fast.

And then, with well-whipped lancewood and
lightest of bamboo—

A lithe nine ounces quivering in very life with
you—

You're ready for the placid pool or little moun-
tain brook,

By rushing stream or shaded pool to con your
well-filled book;

To see the meeting tip and butt, the silken fibres
fine,

From fly to reel-knot tested well, as spins your
faithful line;

To wade or wait, to sit or lie, (forgive me if 'tis
true),

Thereby to show a goodly mess which all were
hooked by you.

The speckled gleaming beauties break the surface
with a dash;

They dart beneath the lily pads and in the ripples
flash;

Their silvery forms are quivering and leaping in
the spray.

Uncoil your leader! launch your plumes! make
ready for the fray!

They have a really dazzling look as side by side
they lay;

"I caught them all," in honest pride, I seem to hear
you say.

And when in odorous quiet they are browning in
the pan,

They are a most enticing sight to any angling
man.

Or when they're roasted in the heat of ashes 'neath
the fire

And come out white and smoking hot to meet our
heart's desire—

Well! when I think of it, you see, I cannot seem
to wait,

And sort of get uneasy and go to "cuttin' bait."

SPRING OPENING.

Slowly awaking and lifting their heads,
Gladly forsaking their cold, frozen beds,
Out for Spring's opening, bright, fresh and fair,
Every one welcome, not one to spare,
Modest anemones, hiding so still,
Snow-drop and crocus, and gold daffodil,
Dog-wood and violet, blossoming sweet,
Nodding salutes, as the new-comers meet.
The notes of the bluebird, greeting the flowers;
The song of the robin, calling for showers;
Alders in tassels, maples in plumes,
Soft pussy-willows, witch-hazel blooms;
Tree-top rehearsals, after the Night
Lifts up the curtain and lets in the light.

Mating and wooing,
Happy pursuing,
Fluttering and billing,
Chipping and trilling.
Ready to build,
Carrying straws ;
Hopes now fulfilled ;
Never a pause.
Plump little breasts,
In round, cosy nests.
Small eggs warm,
Away from the storm ;
Shells now are breaking.
Over the side,
Hungry mouths open,
Open so wide.

Twittering of swallows, fighting of wrens,
Calling of catbirds, ferns in the fens,
Carpets of mosses, for lone rocky glens,
Four-footed sleepers creeping out from their dens,

Yellow and black the bumble-bees buzz,
Dressed in their suits of velvety fuzz;
Bumming and humming out in the fields,
Where honey its treasures of sweetening yields.
Nature's Reception-Room furnished at last,
Forgotten the days of the storm and the blast,
Warmed by the sunshine that tempers the air,
The bosom of Earth no longer is bare.

RUSTLING DAYS.

Crispy and clear, the morning bright
In frosty freshness dawns from night,
And, tingling on the ruddy cheeks,
The air its tonic chill bespeaks.
On wall and limb, with footsteps light,
The squirrels speed in nimble flight.
Across the sky a hermit crow
On lazy rising wing flies low.
As day creeps on, a hazy mist
Veils purple hills for sunlight's tryst,
And, whisp'ring through the rustling maize,
The breeze a drowsy requiem plays.
Across the fields where harvests wait,
The quail in answer calls his mate.

Where yellow blossoms paid the cost,
Barberries redden in the frost.

In savinned pastures, growing late,
To summer days that ling'ring wait,
Waving "good-by," with parting nod,
In splendor droops the golden-rod.
Gray ember days, dim glows the light,
In dreamy softness, soothing quite,
The heated care in summer's train,
And kindling twilight fires again!



AFTER THE SNOW.

'Tis faded, every fleecy fold
That lingered over leaf and sod,
In sheltered hollows chill and cold,
Where, on the withered golden-rod,
But late, in chirping social chat,
The chickadee and snowbird sat.
Clear waters, sparkling, ripple with the breeze,
Where melting floats of crystal idly tossed,
And running brooks that singing seek the seas,
No longer murmur 'neath their roofs of frost,
In muffled music almost lost.
Hid in the leafy meshes of the trees
The feathery citizens of air
Brood in their woven homes their tiny eggs to life.
In meadow and in brook the piping clans awake,
And busy blackbirds chatter in and out the brake,

In neighborly content or brisk and cheerful strife,
And fresh in dainty tints from Nature's palette laid,
Flower faces sweetly smile from out their grassy
shade.

The winter warms and loses chill,
And softly now the bluebird tunes his plaintive fife.
The cruel, cutting wind has sheathed its sharpened
knife

And warm the sunshine lies along the hill,
And pillowed clouds their misty rainbows spill.
'Tis past, the storm, the ice, the snow,
And kindly zephyrs gently blow
From off the land to kiss the sea,
For spring is born, the earth is free.

LOVE'S TOKEN.

In the skies the birds have read the notes,
They're written on leaf and spray,
The songsters warble from throbbing throats,
"The Year has been kissed by May."
The kiss was yielded beneath the veil
That a friendly shower had thrown.
Flashing with silver, mistily pale,
Where the drifting sunlight shone.

Shyly, she scarcely confessed the while
The secret the blossoms knew,
Flocking in many a wooded aisle,
And the greenening grasslands through.
For the children told that April showers
Had brought the flowers of May,
And sprites of the woods, in sylvan bowers,
Said that Spring had passed that way.

But full from the heart the lover sang,
And the strain was blithely gay,
As the echoed roundelay clearly rang,
"The Year has been kissed by May!"

THE DISCOVERY.

He clambered up the narrow ledge
And trod the broadened height,
And stood in silence looking down
On depths of dazzling light.

A silver surface, closely framed
In rocky barriers high,
Mirrored the snowy clouds above
That drifted in the sky.

And shadows fell across the lake
Where hemlock, spruce and pine
Flung out their straggling needled boughs
In sharply serried line.

A lonely ptarmigan in gray
 Rose fluttering at his feet;
A squirrel sent a challenge back,
 In line of swift retreat.

And often there the stag had come,
 His velvet nose to dip,
Into the crystal, cooling flood,
 In slow content to sip.

The hunter rested on his gun
 And, breathing through the trees,
The whisper of a sighing song
 Was borne upon the breeze.

Oh gem of beauty, mountain set!
 Clear well of heaven's dew!
The golden sunshine lights thy face,
 Thy peace is deep and true!

THE YEAR.

Scarce has the Yule clog blazed its wonted time,
Its last brand left to light another fire,
When from the silence of each lifted spire
There falls the summons of the New Year's chime;
Sharp peals that ring o'er sparkling worlds of rime,
Telling no tale of age and dying powers,
Youth sings the songs of life and morning hours.
Fresh is the promise of each favored clime,
Green grows the grass beneath the banks of snow,
Then white anemones lift faces pure;
The growing year, with ling'ring steps and slow,
Loiters through fields where roses hold their lure
And lustrous sunbeams light the lands aglow;
Then Yule clogs flash again and night is sure.

HIS HARVEST.

He's getting ready for market,
The lad who holds the oars,
And dips in the silvered surface
That mirrors grassy shores.

And the sun-browned hands are busy,
As dropping crystal gems,
He lifts from the cooling waters
The lightly anchored stems.

All golden white lay the lilies
And hide his shoeless feet;
And faintly the incense is floating
In waves of perfume sweet.

And brighter then are the faces,
So dull with tired care,
That look at the laddie waiting
Beside the crossing there.

Oh, fragrant bloom of the waters!
Oh, breath of gem-set hills!
The dream of thy dewy kisses
The longing spirit thrills.

The city is greeting the country;
The lake the dusty street;
And there is the lad left waiting,
Where track and roadway meet.

And they that bought by the wayside,
As mile on mile is rolled,
Bend down to snowy petals
That nestle hearts of gold.

WHEN WE WERE BOYS.

'Twas when we first began to know
This good old world of ours,
All running over with a wealth
Of sunshine and of flowers,

That everything, though full of age,
To us seemed fresh and new,
And all the fields of life were bright
With rainbow-tinted dew.

Our mother's tables groaned beneath
A feast of viands rare,
And sorrow seemed a fairy myth,
We never dreamed of care.

And when the night had draped the skies
And lit the lamps of heaven,
We drowsed in deeper depths of calm
Than did the Sleepers Seven.

We knew where hung the hidden fruit
Of pasture and of wood,
And where each feathered songster flew
And fluttered o'er her brood.

We knew where blossoms blushed in spring,
Where finny fishes flashed,
And where the brook so merrily
O'er rock and shallow splashed.

Oh, many a romance now we tell!
"When you and I were boys,"
About a thousand jolly times,
A lengthened tale of joys.

I wonder when this world shuts out
Its weary song of pain,
If in the Home-land we'll awake
To find we're boys again!

Not longing then, in looking back,
For anything that's past,
But in a world forever new,
All satisfied at last.

AN ANCIENT PHARMACY.

I'd only hinted at a cold
That chill November day,
When Grandma dropped her knitting-work,
And put her specks away.

I saw her moving towards the door,
To climb the attic stair,
I followed, with protesting voice,—
Her pharmacy was there.

Along the rafters sloping down,
In goodly bunches tied,
Were hung the pungent herbs and mint,
Their virtues true and tried.

'Twas useless then for me to say,
 "I'm better, don't you see?"
My peace was made by drinking down
 A bowl of boneset tea.

The herbs are scattered to the winds ;
 The sloping roof's decayed ;
There's but a crumbling cellar wall
 Where I in childhood played.

I'm thinking of that good old dame
 And all her kindly care,
Oh, how I'd like again with her
 To climb the attic stair !

THANKSGIVING AT GRANDMA'S.

The little guests have just arrived,
And in their circle small,
Have gathered by the snapping fire
That lightens up the hall.

And Jack, as host, stands in their midst,
He has so much to say
About the preparations made
To keep Thanksgiving Day.

And, interested all, they hear,
"I guess we've got enough,
For Grandma knows that certain sure
We need a lot of stuff.

"I've watched the gobbler getting fat,
I tell you, he'll be prime,
Besides, there'll be the chicken pie,
We'll have a jolly time.

"I've helped them make the other pies,
There's apple, squash and mince;
And then there's jars and bottles full
Of plum preserve and quince.

"We'll have our crooked wishing-bones,
And apples, nuts and figs,
And on the table you will see
Two little roasted pigs."

With "ahs!" and "ohs!" and longing sighs
They hear the bill of fare.
Now, boys and girls, what would you give,
If you could all be there?

LITTLE NEW-YEAR.

Dear Little Year, how bright you are,
You're only one day tall,
You haven't traveled very far,
You're scarce a Year at all!

Of course I know you have a name,
And call it all your own,
And that you'll claim it all the same
As if you'd older grown.

I think you have from Elf-Land come;
Please tell us, if you can,
If you're a son of small Tom Thumb,
That very tiny man.

There's just a sprig of mistletoe
Left hanging in the hall,
And if you think no one will know,
I'll kiss you, though so small.

'Tis sad your brother grew so old
He couldn't longer stay,
For he, though frosted with the cold,
Was young enough to play.

And all the time on Christmas day,
Amongst all kinds of folks,
'Twas good as going to a play,
To hear him crack his jokes.

He was a good old man you see,
And when you have to leave,
If you are just as good as he,
Then every one will grieve.

THANKSGIVING TIME.

The hazel-nuts are brown and dry,
The fire upon the trees
Has blazed in yellow and in red
And wasted on the breeze.

The flower-plumes are bowed and bent,
The cricket by the path
Has left the chill of frosty nights
And chirps upon the hearth.

Self-satisfied, the turkey struts,
Unmindful of his fate,
And cranberry-meadows heap their fruit
In barrel and in crate.

Now loit'ring by the kitchen door,
Or near the pantry shelf,
"Jack Horners" slyly thrust their thumbs,
Each tasting for himself.

Heap up the fire on cosy hearths,
Pilgrims are on the way
To fill the vacant chairs again,
And keep Thanksgiving Day!

NIGHT AND MORNING.

So sleepy now, so tired now,
The little lad in white!
The pillow nests his curly head,
It's time to say "good night."

'Tis Christmas eve, outside the snow
Is lying on the hill,
The twinkling stars shine clear and bright,
The frosty air is still.

In gentle voice the mother tells
About the Baby King
And how the shepherds keeping watch
Heard herald angels sing.

His questions asked, his prayers all said,
His stocking hanging high,
"Oh mama, is it morning now?"
He murmurs with a sigh.

'Tis morning now and he's awake,
The little lad in white,
He tumbles out upon the floor
When day is hardly light.

And, oh, to be a boy again
And such a boy as he
Who hugs that bulging stocking tight
In purest ecstasy!

How much it holds, what precious things!
He spreads them on the bed,
Dear little lad, may blessings fall
Upon your curly head!

And when you come to man's estate,
Though many years you see,
Always, to us, who loved you first,
Our *little* lad you'll be.

AN INTERVIEW.

I was reporting for the *News*
And 'twas a wintry day,
The ice had frozen on the trees
In films of crystal spray.

And as I sought the interview,
I heard the coasters cry,
I saw the skaters on the lake,
The sleighs were flitting by.

Within his counting-room he sat,
Old Father Christmas gay,
He gave me audience with a smile,
And sent his clerks away.

A laugh came rumbling from his boots,
"It is my busy day,
You want some points about my work?"
I heard him kindly say.

And then it would have pleased you well
To hear him tell the way
To get the world in proper shape
For keeping Christmas day.

He told about the Yule log's cheer,
And Christmas-trees of spruce,
He mentioned where his turkeys grew,
Before he turned them loose.

He talked of tons of evergreen
And candy mountains high,
But when he came to mistletoe,
He gave a weary sigh.

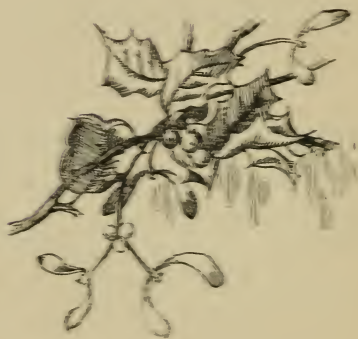
He said about that pretty sprig,
The crop was always short,
He'd hunted every country through
And bought and bought and bought.

"The holly, with its berries red,
They like it all, you know,
But, old and young, they like the best,
The branching mistletoe."

He ordered in plum-pudding hot,
He showed me stockings full,
He sang me Christmas carols sweet,
He cracked an Irish bull.

And I could hardly get away,
He followed to the street,
And then I ran to get his words
Upon the printed sheet.

I always loved the dear old chap,
But love is born anew,
Since in his counting-room I had
That jolly interview.



THANKSGIVING HOURS.

O'er foaming surf and hollow wave
Where rising tides the shore-lines lave
The fisherman, rememb'ring good,
Looks on the depths that give him food.

The miner holds his candle high
And thanks the God of earth and sky
For riches paid from wealth below,
The minted wage of hard-struck blow.

The farmer sees on stubbled field
The aftermath of garnered yield,
No anxious thoughts of famine stare ;
His heaping cribs repay his care.

And whirring wheel and spindle wound
Shows labor in its busy round,
'Tis well that every righteous sense
Shall find a fitting recompense.

But they who see no sunny skies
To arch for them a paradise,
Still question, though they silent live,
"Oh why should we thanksgiving give?"

God's wealth no stint of measure knows,
His goodness ever onward flows,
And, somewhere, it must surely be,
He keeps the gold for you and me.

Perhaps we have not rightly sought,
Perhaps too much of anxious thought
Has kept away the blessing meant,
Has claimed forever what was lent.

If faith be sure, thanksgiving suns
Will shine upon earth's saddest ones,
And golden, mellow sunshine lie
E'en o'er the lands where harvests die.

CHRISTMAS GIFT.

Mistletoe around the door,
Light feet dancing on the floor,
Spruces bent with parceled love,
Tapers twinkling all above,
I was there my Love to greet,
So was Doris, blushing, sweet.

Hard I'd pleaded for a sign,
Well she knew I wished her mine,
Much I hoped and oft I sighed,
Oh, to win a bonnie bride!
Beating heart and eyes that prayed,
All for love of one small maid!

Many were the gifts that night,
One of mine in purest white,

Op'ning, showed me Doris' face,
Was there ever such a case?
On the back I read a sign,
There was lightly written, "Thine."

Did she only mean the card?
Could I solve the riddle hard?
When I questioned her, she said,
"Have you not correctly read?
Stupid, simple knight of mine,
If you want the gift, 'tis thine."



THE RESCUE.

On the rustic bridge we lingered,
Beneath, no waters flowed,
But green the turf on bank and slope
Where summer verdure showed.

Thus slyly Polly questioned me,
"Were that a river deep,
And I there struggling in the stream,
Then would you downward leap?"

I vowed I but desired the test,
If she were in the tide,
I overboard would madly jump
And battle to her side.

I ne'er knew what the witch would do,
The words were hardly said,
Than she was seated down below,
Whither she'd lightly sped.

Demurely she was looking up,
I wouldn't take the dare.
I vaulted quickly o'er the rail,
And kneeled beside her there.

I clasped her, struggling, in my arms,
"Oh, go away, you bear!
I'm pretty sure I'm safe," she said,
"But you're not playing fair!"

Said I, "You know in love and war,
'Most anything is fair,
Did I not know you wanted help,
Of course I should not dare."

WITH REGRETS.

I heard a pleading little voice,
 Behind the lilacs talking,
And peeping through the blossoms blue,
 I halted in my walking.

I caught my breath. Behold the girl
 Who my poor heart had taken,
And twenty other men she'd crazed,
 If I was not mistaken.

But here was Cupid at her feet ;
 He'd lost his bow and arrow,
And she'd as coolly winged the boy
 As though he'd been a sparrow.

I laughed to see him in the plight
That he'd so oft created,
It was a shame so fine a lad
Had never yet been mated.

Alas! a truce! a shaft he plucked,
On which my name was written;
Then she bound up his broken wing;
That's how I got the mitten!

Before, I'd hoped but had not known
That she for me was caring;
Ah! how I raged to see her there,
Dan Cupid's wing repairing.

So while I mourn her healing wound,
I can't think I was stupid,
To be so much in love with her
Since she e'en captured Cupid.

UNUSUAL.

After the walks on the beaches
And the moonlight strolls on the sands,
Back to the city receptions,
To bow to Dame Fashion's commands.

After the gay mountain climbings
And the roll of the ocean swells,
Back to the Park and the pavements,
To the beaux and debutante belles.

But the hand that rested so lightly
On my arm, when we strolled alone,
I've taken to keep forever,
And now I can call it my own.

For in spite of all the delusions
About the sweet Summer-girl's way,
My Summer-girl loved in earnest;
She did not intend it for play.

So after the walks and climbings,
We will stroll together through life,
I'm sure my girl of the Summer,
In earnest, will be a true wife.

THE MINER'S TALE.

"Was you askin' why an' wherefore

We gave him such a name?

Well, sir, if you'll just be seated,

I will explain the same.

"Now the boys they sort of reckoned

That when he once was gone

That there wa'n't a thing could wake him,

Exceptin' Gabriel's horn.

"Which they call him 'Sleepy' Johnson,

With reason you may say,

Since his cabin up an' started

An' moved itself away.

“It was somethin’ of a landslide
That down that mountain roared,
But as near as we could reckon,
All through the thing he snored.

“When his chum left for the evenin’,
Johnson was fast asleep
An’ a puffin’ an’ a blowin’,
His breathin’ long an’ deep.

“When the whole side of the mountain
Had started down the trail,
We all follered through the canon,
A feelin’ rather pale.

“Cause we s’posed we’d find a body,
That night, or in the spring,
When the snow would start a meltin’
An’ matin’ bluebirds sing.

"But the rock beneath his cabin
Tobogganed down the hill,
An' the outfit landed safely
Way off there by the mill.

"As we was gettin' nearer,
Inside we heard a roar,
An' we knew it must be Johnson,
For that was Johnson's snore.

"While the trees an' sticks of timber
Had crashed around his door,
An' the shock had shook the mountain,
He'd answered with a snore.

"An' about the change of landscape
He never said a word,
Also within his cabin
His sleepin' still was heard.

“So we call him ‘Sleepy’ Johnson
An’ that’s the reason why,”
And the miner coughed a little
And truth was in his eye.

NOGGINS.

He didn't look a hero,
A dog of no degree,
He wore a shocking yellow coat,
That wasn't good to see.

But when at Jerry Connors'
Their shack was all burned up,
We got to thinking after that,
He was a splendid pup.

Now Tom was with the baby,
His mother gone away,
And having got the child asleep,
Young Tom went out to play.

Just how it really happened,
No one will ever know,
But pretty soon the sloping roof
Was blazing up like tow.

And Tom was in the hollow,
He didn't see the smoke,
The mother from the distance saw,
'Twas then that Noggins spoke.

And how his yelp was ringing!
And he was making tracks,
You couldn't then have frightened him
With fifty blazing shacks.

And there that precious baby
Was lying on the floor,
It didn't seem as though his ma
Would see him any more.

The cur he just appeared to know
That something wasn't right,
And in he dashed right through the fire,
Completely out of sight.

And Tommy from his playing
Came screaming up the hill,
Just as the dog was dragging out
That blessed little Bill.

And then there was a hugging,
The dog all singed and burned.
Came in for quite a share himself,
Which he had fairly earned.

And now at Connors' cabin,
Right up there by the hill,
They love that Noggins most as much.
As they do little Bill.

Oh, say, there he's a coming,
He's limping pretty bad,
As since the fire he always has,
But still he's never sad.

Somehow I'm sort of thinking,
If such a thing can be,
That he's as good a Christian
As either you or me.

PROMOTED.

1898.

"Surgeon Gibbs, promoted,
And Sergeant Smith, they say,
M'Colgan there, and Dunphy,
Promoted all to-day!

"Huntington's marines, sir,
'Twas them that won the fight,
With thirteen hours of shooting,
Away into the night.

"Dead, sir, you're remarking,
God bless them, yes, it's true!
While serving 'neath Old Glory,
With Spanish guns in view.

“Pickets driven in, sir,
They charged right up the hill,
But broke before the volleys
We gave them, with a will!”

And four there quiet lying,
In stately silence wait,
Promoted in the battle,
And Glory crowns their fate!

Dear ones await their coming,
Afar beyond the sea,
They gave their all, and falling,
They died for you and me.

WAR AND PEACE.

Over the field the smoke-clouds were lying,
Over the field the shot and shell
Swept in swift haste to dead and the dying,
Fierce is the tale their messages tell.

Down where the turf in a shelt'ring hollow
Showed not the mark of hoof or a wheel,
There where the hurrying squadrons follow
Into the struggles of powder and steel,

There where the tide of battle had broken,
The torn and dead in ranks were laid low,
There where fiercely the bugle had spoken,
Nested two lovers all safe from the foe.

Sheltered beside the grasses yet springing,
Over a home in the furrough-marked sod,
Lo! a fond watcher, in full tide of singing,
Sits on a spray of bright golden-rod.

Cosily resting, contentedly warming
Small speckled promises under her breast,
Little dame-sparrow, through all the storming,
Bright-eyed and resolute, guards her round nest.

Oh, peaceful isle in the ocean of fighting!
Who lifts the ramparts invisible there?
Who holds the stars, the sky-chambers lighting?
Who hears the lowest and feeblest prayer?

After the battle, surgeons and sisters,
Badged with the red cross pitiful bend;
Faint muffled groans and low dying whispers,
Dreary the echoes that battle-field's lend.

Sweet in a burst of bright trilling glory,
Song of the home-land and home-lands so fair,
Sings the brown sparrow, uplifting his story,
"Thanks be to God, for shelter and care!"

COMING HOME.

Unfurl Old Glory once again
And fling it to the breeze,
The First will soon be coming home
From over Southern seas!

The mothers sing around the house;
'Tis morning, after night!
For all of them have heard the news,
And now their hearts are light.

We knew the time for breaking camp—
It seems but yesterday—
Again we see the steady ranks,
Again the bugles play.

Then Fairchild gave the drum to Todd
Who drummed them down the street;
There were the crowds that thronged the way,
We heard the tramping feet.

And Hale was leading at the front,
So quiet and so true,
And every man went out to fight—
His best to dare and do.

And then the waiting at the cars,
To get the last good-by!
We knew they couldn't all return,
We felt that some must die.

But thinking then of '61,
Our sturdy lads we knew;
The blood of '76 still flowed
Beneath the coats of blue.

And, on the day Manila fell,
Our fellows took a hand;
They charged to music, up the beach,
And fairly "beat the band."

Somehow they haven't seemed to know
The science of retreat,
And when they ran, 'twas towards the foe,
With quick, impatient feet.

And will it then be worth the price,
When all is said and done?
And will the world be better much,
For all the battles won?

Who says that one has died in vain?
Good blood is never lost!
And they that gave it, freely gave,
And counted not the cost.

Beneath the cypress some must stand,
Uncover for the dead!
Into the camps beyond the flood,
All gallantly they led.

Look up and off, to sunset lands,
Where beating billows foam;
Ring out the cry across the state,
"The First is coming home!"

MUSTERED OUT.

From far across the foaming floods,
The tropic currents meeting,
They sailed through sparkling waters blue—
And oh, the joy of greeting!

They come again, but not the same,
For, by the battles' reaping,
Some, with the Great Commander's corps,
Their vigils now are keeping.

And, from the lofty battlements,
Their steady purpose noting,
We seem to hear their "All is well!"
Out from the silence floating.

With Hale's "God bless you!" in their ears,
They came still nearer, nearer,
To meet their mothers, sweethearts, wives,
Each waiting moment dearer.

The bands all played their gladdest strains,
The bells were welcome pealing,
And every heart sang "Home, sweet home!"
Each added mile revealing.

With misty eyes the soldier sees
His Annie Laurie waiting,
And love and tenderness, as one,
Together there are mating.

They've brought us back the flag we gave,
All torn with battle's beating,
And still 'tis proudly borne aloft,
'Twas never held retreating.

They're mustered out, from march and halt,
From bivouac and from battle,
To hear no more the bugle's call,
The bullet's whistling rattle.

Sing of the brave who stood the test,
Well they deserve their glory;
Long shall the Colorado First
Remembered be in story!

THE FIRST PRISONER.

An April morn, and slow the Charles was creeping
to the sea,

The bluebird fitting o'er the field was piping plain-
tively,

And in the quiet villages along the Boston way,
The fire upon the forge was dead, the hammer'd
ceased to play.

The elders gathered on the streets. Before the
dawn was light,

The minute-men had heard the call and mustered
for the fight:

For Paul Revere, in hurried haste, the yeomanry
had stirred,

And ready were the Yankee guns to answer at the
word.

At Watertown the sun had shown the waning of
the day,

The children on the village green were shouting
in their play:

Dame Barnard plied her busy task beside the
kitchen fire,

Her kinsmen up at Lexington had faced the
British ire.

The red-coats came. She hears the word, and
frightened women call,

They crowd around her as she stands stern,
womanly and tall.

She shades her eyes to catch the sight that waked
her neighbors' fears,

She sees the dust, a horseman rides, his quick
approach she hears.

One man alone she'd never seen of whom she
stood in fear,

The blood of '75 is up, the trooper's drawing near;

She queries then if he has slain her brothers in
the fight,

He'd fired no shot that day, he said, from early
morn till night.

His cartridge-box she opened then, 'twas only
partly filled,

"*You lie!*" she said, and every nerve within her
being thrilled.

Her hand was on his collar laid, she took him
from his horse,

She stripped him of accoutrements, he mutely bore
his loss.

She sent him to the guard-house where the river's
waters pass

And led his horse within her yard to crop the
springing grass;

She kept it safely sheltered, gave it kindly care
and feed,

Until a Natick farmer called and claimed the
stolen steed.

The soldier halted in his gait, he bore a wound,
'twas slight,
Yet sore enough to check him in the eagerness
of flight:
For heroes, in defense of home, were ready for
the fray,
And, in retreat, the regulars were hurried fast
away.

In coming into Watertown the prisoner met his
fate,
To Boston he would ask the way, but he was
asked to wait:
Then soon he took to drumming for his captors
on the street,
And "Yankee Doodle" was the tune that first they
made him beat.

This tale of war Dame Barnard told when many
years had passed,
At ninety-five her eyes still flashed, her speech
came quick and fast:

I sing the song to memorize the story of the deed,
The spirit true of '76 has never gone to seed.

'Twas long ago at Concord's bridge the whistling
bullets sped,

'Twas long ago the rebels stood and saw their
fallen dead,

The rebels were the patriots, our patriotic sires,
Their deeds shall ever light the blaze of Fame's
eternal fires.

WITH THE FLEET.
1898.

O breath of May, O spicy breeze,
Borne through the spray of Southern seas,
Where smoke of battle lay!
What of the fiery, roaring crash,
The leaping flames that flung their flash
Across Manila bay?

Had Yankee valor lost its zeal?
Hear once again the ringing peal
Of cheers from off the decks;
And see the turrets dealing shell
To trembling ships—'twas but to tell
Of sinking Spanish wrecks!

They circled off Manila town,
Then on Cavite bearing down,
The fleet sailed bravely in.

'Twas on the bridge that Dewey stood,
And O, it did a sailor good,
To see him stand and win!

Wide fell the screaming Spanish shot,
All wildly aimed and driven hot—
Who says they were not brave?
The day was won, and, in the light,
The vanquished raised the flag of white—
Columbia ruled the wave.

ON THE OLD CAMP GROUND.

1898.

The sun has set ; from street to street,
Within the pacing sentry's beat,
Again the song of the field goes round,
"Tenting to-night on the old camp ground!"

Where are the lads of sixty-one,
Who paid the price of battles won?
The roll is long and the answers few,
But the North and South, they are leal and true.

And now no picket lines divide,
The Blue and Gray tent side by side,
They keep together their bivouac bright,
And old songs float on the breeze to-night.

The Yankee cheer and the Rebel yell,
The battle cry of Freedom tell,
Shoulder to shoulder, in line they tramp,
And 'neath Old Glory they make their camp.

The song the boys sang long ago
Breathes in a chorus soft and low,
Tender the notes of the echoed sound,
"Tenting to-night on the old camp ground!"

TO IAN MACLAREN

A WAYSIDE GREETING.

Good Dominie, of ready pen,
Thy kindly, tender heart we ken!
And, in the name of auld lang syne,
We stretch our eager hands to thine.

And deem it not presumptuous quite,
If we shall covet e'en the right
To call thee friend and welcome speak,
To this our home of plain and peak.

We've walked together up the Glen,
By rushing stream, o'er moor and fen;
Cherished the hours when we did bide
The bonnie brier bush beside.

And wilt thou be our Domsie kind?
And on some morning may we find
Thee waiting in the kingdom there,
Whither through weary years we fare?

We thank thee for MacLure and Jess!
In all Drumtochty we confess
An interest that marks the skill
Which shaped the vision to thy will.

Let not thy pen rust on its way;
But further let thy fancy play,
While we thy hostage friends give ear,
To catch the music of thy cheer.

And when between us swells the sea,
Our longing thoughts shall turn to thee,
While fondly decking memory's shrine
With heather and with columbine.

ARTHUR WARD.

Denver, Colorado,
March, 1899.



BEYOND THE SHADOWS.

There have been many dreary times
That saw no shining sun ;
Through leagues of rough and desert paths
My wandering way has run.

And yet I love this world of ours,
Of earth and sky and sea ;
How can I leave it for a world
Of dim uncertainty ?

Ever I seem to see that hour,
When birds awoke the morn
That ushered in the gladdest day
That ever met the dawn.

Oh, Master, after death alive,
When man's best light had gone,
There, in that garden of Judea,
Our dearest hope was born!

Oh, morning, on the hills of life,
Blushing so rosily!
Can morning o'er the sunset wave
Be fairer less to see?

I know I cling to present scenes,
To earthly friends and kin,
But to the border-land of faith,
Oh, let me enter in!

INTROSPECTION.

Sacred the attar of our memories' June,
Whose shattered flasks shed perfume rare ;
Still breathing through the pulsing air
In subtle movement to a voiceless tune ;
No fragrance can be wholly lost but must,
When crushed and bruised from out the leaf,
Like incense rise, a votive grief,
In soul to live, when all is changed to dust.
Couldst change the deathless sense of what has been !
Better to weave the loss and gain,
Till Heavenly hours shall voice the strain
Whose hidden notes had been unseen.

CHORDS OF HOPE.

Oh, fullest Love that never fails,
 However dark the night,
Above the cloudy mists of doubt
 We look for morning's light!

We seek that Presence once again
 That sorrow hid away,
Beyond the bearing of the cross,
 We see the flush of day.

We praise when Easter sunlight shines,
 When Easter lilies bloom
And birds in hallelujahs wake
 The silence of the tomb.

And if by faith, perchance, we hear
Thy gracious message fall,
Then may we heed the voiceless word
And answer to the call!

And to no creed of death we bow,
For all the bound are free.
Oh, Carpenter of Galilee,
Our life is all in Thee.

SCATTERED BLOSSOMS.

I knew not what my part might be
In soothing care away,
I knew not how to lift the clouds
That drifted o'er the day;

Until I dropped one blossom bright,
All fresh in sweet perfume,
From out my grasp that scarce could hold
My fragrant wealth of bloom.

An eager waiting hand was stretched
To lift the fallen flower,
I saw my mission in the chance
That brightened all the hour.

And now I watch for outstretched hands
That call me day by day,
And scatter blossoms joyously,
Along the busy way.

We linger as we say "Good-by!"
Our message fully penned;
And with a slow reluctance write
The "Finis" at the end.

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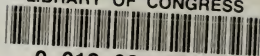
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